a flexible drive member coupling said drive sprocket and said wheel sprocket such that said rear wheel is caused to rotate in response to operation of said engine/transmission assembly, wherein said flexible drive member includes an upper extent extending between the upper portions of said drive sprocket and said wheel sprocket, and a lower extent extending between the lower portions of said drive sprocket and said wheel sprocket; and

a tensioner fixed to at least one of said frame and engine/transmission assembly against both pivotal and translational movement with respect to said output shaft, wherein said tensioner contacts the lower extent, and wherein said drive sprocket, said wheel sprocket, and said tensioner are sized and positioned such that a belt path length defined by said drive sprocket, said rear sprocket, and said tensioner remains substantially constant as said swingarm pivots through said range of motion.

9. (Amended) A method for tensioning a motorcycle flexible drive member, the method comprising:

providing a motorcycle frame and a swingarm;

mounting an engine/transmission assembly to the motorcycle frame, the engine/transmission assembly having an output shaft rotating about an axis of rotation in response to operation of the engine/transmission assembly;

mounting a drive sprocket to the output shaft for rotation therewith;

mounting a rear wheel to the swingarm for rotation with respect to the swingarm;

mounting a wheel sprocket to the rear wheel for rotation therewith;

pivotably interconnecting the swingarm with at least one of the frame and engine/transmission assembly to permit pivotable movement of the swingarm in a range of motion about a pivot axis that is non-collinear with the axis of rotation of the output shaft;

coupling the drive sprocket and the wheel sprocket with a flexible drive member such that the rear wheel rotates in response to rotation of the output shaft;

mounting a tensioner to at least one of the engine/transmission assembly and frame such that the tensioner applies tension to a lower extent of the drive member;

fixing the tensioner against translational and pivotable movement with respect to the engine/transmission assembly and frame; and